

Northeast Nature Notes

News and Events from the Missouri Department of Conservation • Apr/May/June 2013



For the Love of Trees

Four trees grew close together like four corners of a house in my parents' front yard. That's where we made our playhouse, where we cooked imaginary meals and took care of our imaginary families. The sweet gum down near the road had branches growing low—the climbing tree, where everyone could reach at least one branch. The persimmon grove predicted the weather (fork, spoon, knife—surely you've played this game), but it also provided ammunition for battles if you were willing to brave the yellow jackets. And the mimosa, my dear friend the mimosa, with its sweet smells and tickly pink flowers, would gather the rain and hold it in its tiny leaflets, just waiting for the storm to be over so we could run from branch to branch making our own rain showers in the sunshine.

I love trees. I love all the trees, even the ones I'm supposed to despise. (Those despicable autumn olives really are a pest, but their silvery speckled leaves, tiny red berries, and twisty branches are so beautiful.) I love the smell of sassafras, the sticky sap of cedar, the changing colors of the maples, the rustle and sway of leaves and branches in the wind. I love trees with a love that



All it takes to foster a love of trees is to bring a child to a tree.

surpasses words. My heart swells with joy at the sights and sounds and smells of trees. I find peace in the branches and shade of trees.

Planting a tree is an act of love and hope. It shows we care not only for ourselves, but for our children, our neighbors, our planet, our future. But just as a responsible parent makes hard decisions out of love, we sometimes have to make hard decisions about our trees. Even though I love the autumn olives, they are an invasive species that threatens our native habitat. They have to be removed. I mourn the

loss of a beloved tree, but know it's the right decision.

When it's time for you to make decisions about the trees you love or hope to love, the Department of Conservation can help you. Our website has information about choosing the right tree for your location, caring for your trees, and even online ordering for bundles of native saplings from the George O. White Nursery. Please visit mdc.mo.gov/node/19333 for more information.

-Amanda Moore, Naturalist

Northeast Regional Office and Interpretive Center

3500 S. Baltimore, Kirksville, MO 63501 • mdc.mo.gov/node/279



The Northeast Regional Office and Interpretive Center is located just south of Kirksville on Hwy 63. Come inside to enjoy exhibits, attend programs, purchase permits, and pick up free conservation brochures. Head outside to walk the habitat trail or fish in the stocked pond.

HOURS:

Building:

Monday-Friday, 8 AM-5 PM

Trail and Pond:

Daily, 4 AM-10 PM

TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 660-785-2420 to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list.



April Events

Knee High Naturalists
Great "Eggs"pectations
April 1•Monday•10:30 am
No registration, ages 3-6

What comes from an egg? Are all eggs alike? Answer these questions and more as we investigate eggs!

Creature Feature

New in Nature

April 10•Wednesday•3:30 pm

No registration, ages 7-12

Spring is here and animal babies are everywhere! Which ones came from an egg? Will their parents watch over them, or will they be on their own? Discover the many ways animal babies make their way in nature!

Knee High Naturalists

Wet, Wonderful Waterfowl

April 15•Monday•10:30 am

No registration, ages 3-6

With their honking and quacking calls and their waddling walk, ducks and geese are sure to keep you amused. Dive in and discover waterfowl with us at this program!

Discovery Team

New in Nature

April 17•Wednesday•3:30 pm

No registration, teens

From thousands of eggs left on their own to live babies nursed and guarded, wild animals have many different strategies for producing young. Learn why those strategies work and take a closer look at the life cycles of common Missouri wildlife.

Conservation Exploration

April 20•Saturday•12:00-4:00

No registration, geared for scouts and 4-H members

We invite area youth organizations to join us for a day of nature activities. These activities are geared to help children reach their goals,

whether for badges or for other achievements. Stop by to cast a line, use a compass, go bird-watching, and more!

May Events

Creature Feature

Secrets of Scum

May 1•Wednesday•3:30

No registration, ages 7-12

You've seen it in ponds, lakes, and even rivers and streams—green and slimy muck covering everything! That pond scum is called algae, and we're going to uncover its secrets at this program.

Family Crappie Clinic

May 3•Friday•6-8:30 pm

May 4•Saturday•7 am-noon

Registration required, families
Families, have fun together as you learn basic crappie fishing skills, including casting, tying knots and proper bait and tackle. There will be a presentation on fish biology and management. Best of all we will be hitting Mark Twain Lake for a day of fishing. Participants will be taken out by guides on boats to try out their skills first hand. Bring your own fishing equipment or borrow ours for the day. Bait will be provided.

Knee High Naturalists

Flutter By, Butterfly

May 6•Monday•10:30 am

No registration, ages 3-6

They flitter and flutter from flower to flower with brightly colored wings—butterflies are beautiful, but did you know they taste with their feet and smell with their antennae? Visit the fascinating world of butterflies with us!

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Conservation Keepers

Caching In

May 18 • Saturday • 1:00 pm

No registration, all ages

Whether you're looking for a quick activity to get the family outside for an afternoon or a long-term challenge with the potential to span continents, geocaching can provide it. With a GPS-enabled device, any nature walk can become a search for "treasure". Learn how and log a cache with us! *GPS devices will not be provided. You must bring a GPS-enabled device to participate.*

Knee High Naturalists

Beaver Fever

May 20 • Monday • 10:30 am

No registration, ages 3-6

He's the most popular performer in the world of beavers, and he's coming to share his story with us! Join us for a visit from the one-and-only Justin Beaver!



Discovery Team

Wetland Wonders

May 22 • Wednesday • 3:30 pm

No registration, teens

Ponds and lakes, rivers, streams, and marshes—all are aquatic habitats, but they each have distinct ecosystems. Let's take a

look at some aquatic habitats and discover what makes them unique. Be prepared to get your feet wet!

June Events

Knee High Naturalists

Mighty Mussels

June 3 • Monday • 10:30 am

No registration, ages 3-6

They have names like deer toe, three-horned wartyback, and elephant ear and are lined with pearly whites, pinks, and purples. Come meet Missouri's mussels and learn how they help keep our water clean.

Creature Feature

Mighty Mussels

June 5 • Wednesday • 3:30 pm

No registration, ages 7-12

They have names like deer toe, three-horned wartyback, and elephant ear and are lined with pearly whites, pinks, and purples. Come meet Missouri's mussels and learn how they help keep our water clean.

Conservation Day Camp

Session I

June 11-13 • 8 am - noon

Registration required, children entering grades 3-5

Session II

June 18-20 • 8 am - noon

Registration required, children entering grades 6-8

This year's camp is inspired by Brian's story in "Hatchet." Campers will learn about survival in nature, including shelter, water, and food sources. Registration opens May 6 and ends June 3.



Conservation Keepers

Mighty Mussels

June 15 • Saturday • 1:00 pm

No registration, all ages

They have names like deer toe, three-horned wartyback, and elephant ear and are lined with pearly whites, pinks, and purples. Come meet Missouri's mussels and learn how they help keep our water clean. We'll meet at the classroom and then head to the river for this program. Please plan to get wet!

Discovery Team

Mighty Mussels

June 26 • Wednesday • 3:30 pm

No registration, teens

They have names like deer toe, three-horned wartyback, and elephant ear and are lined with pearly whites, pinks, and purples. Come meet Missouri's mussels and learn how they help keep our water clean.



HUNTER EDUCATION



Register online for all Hunter Education courses at
mdc.mo.gov/node/3722
A complete listing of courses is also included on this website.

These free 10-hour courses are required for anyone born on or after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. Students ages 11 and up must pass a test at the end of the course to be certified. Students under 15 years old must be accompanied by an adult and show proof of age. If you have any previous Missouri hunting or fishing permits, or a Missouri Conservation Heritage Card, bring them to class.

Location

Hallsville Intermediate School
Palmyra VFW Hall
North Mercer School

Date

April 2 (multiple days)
April 12 (multiple days)
April 13

Time

5:30 pm-9:30 pm
6:00 pm-10:00 pm
8:00 am-7:00 pm

EDUCATOR'S CORNER

Discover Nature Schools

The Discover Nature Schools (DNS) program provides new and interesting curriculum that incorporates hands-on outdoor activities featuring Missouri ecosystems. Teaching students outside has been shown to help improve test scores and help with behavior issues. Each unit comes with excellent teacher and student guides. These materials are free to public, private, or homeschool educators. Grant monies are also available for field trips and supplies for K-12 teachers in the public or private school sectors.

New this year - DNS may be taught during summer school!

Teacher Workshop-Project Learning Tree

April 13, 2013•9:00 am-3:00 pm•Lunch provided•Registration required

MDC Northeast Regional Office•Workshop fee of \$20 is due on the day of the workshop

Project Learning Tree is for educators who work with youth, grades K-12, using hands-on interdisciplinary activities. It includes topics on forestry, wildlife, soil, air, and water. Also, it helps teach children to be stewards of the land and to improve their understanding of conservation and the wise use of our natural resources.

Contact Karen Armstrong at 660-785-2420 or karen.armstrong@mdc.mo.gov to register for the workshop or for more information about DNS.



Missouri Tree Farm Conference

The 33rd annual Conference for Missouri Tree Farmers and Private Woodland Owners will take place on May 31 through June 1, 2013 at the Ed Keyser Tree Farm in Kirksville, MO. Ed Keyser was selected as the 2012 Tree Farmer of the Year due to his excellent work improving his tree farm and his support for sound forest management.

The conference will feature guest speakers on woodland management, invasive species, tree identification, CWD, and growing and using elderberries. Other workshop events include a shiitake mushroom workshop, tours of Truman State University's vineyard, orchard, and vegetable garden, a sawmilling demonstration, and a silent auction.

The cost of the conference is \$35 for adults and \$12 for ages 6-12 and includes lunch. The Shiitake Mushroom Workshop has an additional fee of \$15.

You may contact the Forest and Woodland Association of Missouri for a registration form at 818-645-5399.



No MOre Trash

The entries for the No MOre Trash trashcan decorating contest are in, including one from Ray Miller Elementary in Kirksville! The Ray Miller students came up with the theme "sNo MOre Trash" for their trashcan.

You can view all of the entries at <http://nomoretrash.org/trash-can-contest>.

April is Trash Bash month!

Help BASH TRASH and clean up Missouri with a litter pickup, educational program, or related activity in April. Report your activity and get your efforts acknowledged!

www.nomoretrash.org





CONSERVATION EXPLORATION



Saturday, April 20
12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
MDC Northeast Regional
Office

We invite area youth organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and 4-H to join us for a day of nature activities. These activities are geared to help children reach their goals, whether for badges or for other achievements. Stop by to cast a line, use a compass, go bird-watching, and more!

**Call (660) 785-2420 for
more details.**

discover nature programs . . .

- Help Missourians discover and explore nature
- Provide expert instruction and hands-on activities
- Are available statewide

www.MissouriConservation.org



Serving nature and you



CONSERVATION DAY CAMP



Tuesday-Thursday

8:00 a.m. – 12:00

Session 1: June 11-13

Session 2: June 18-20

Northeast Regional Office

Session 1 is open to campers entering grades 3-5 in the fall. Session 2 is open to campers entering grades 6-8 in the fall.

This year's camp is inspired by Brian's story in "Hatchet." Campers will learn about survival in nature, including shelter, water, and food sources. Registration opens May 6 and ends June 3.

Call (660) 785-2420 for details or to request a registration packet.

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Serving nature and you



Ask the Naturalist

“What do badgers eat?”

One of my favorite stories as a child was about a young badger who was a picky eater—she only wanted to eat bread and jam. North American badgers aren’t so picky about their diet. They are *opportunistic* feeders, taking whatever prey they can find.

A badger’s long claws make it an excellent digger, living and hunting in large burrows. Because it spends most of its time underground, the badger is called a *fossorial* carnivore. It eats a lot of rodents, like ground squirrels and mice, but it will also eat birds, reptiles, amphibians, insects, and even sunflower seeds and corn on occasion.

Sometimes badgers have unexpected partners when they hunt-coyotes! The coyote will catch animals that are trying to escape the hunting badger. The two predators have even been seen playing games together.

The badger isn’t always so friendly. If it feels cornered, it is capable of attacking and overwhelming large predators. They have been known to fight off bears and may be immune to rattlesnake venom. Seeing a badger in the wild is a rare event, but it is best to keep your distance.

Keep asking questions, and I’ll find the answers for you!

-Amanda Moore, Naturalist

Fun and Free

With spring just around the corner, it’s the perfect time to visit the MDC Northeast Regional Office in Kirksville. Stop by during office hours to check out a Discover Nature backpack. These backpacks give you a self-guided tour of the natural world as you walk the habitat trail.



Backpacks can be checked out at the front desk. Each backpack is loaded with tools and information to enhance your experience, from magnifiers and measuring tapes to field guides and a nature journal.

Northeast Nature Notes is available by mail, e-mail, and on the MDC website.

To be added to the mail or e-mail registry, or to switch from one to the other, please contact Amanda Moore at amanda.moore@mdc.mo.gov or call 660-785-2420.

The online version of the newsletter is available at mdc.mo.gov/node/17875.

A full event calendar for the Northeast region is also available on the MDC website.

